



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 856-A

Resolution mourning the death and celebrating the life of Peter Zvi Malkin, the man who captured Adolph Eichmann.

By The Speaker (Council Member Miller) and Council Members Vallone, Nelson, Recchia, Brewer, Comrie, Fidler, Gennaro, Gerson, Liu, McMahon, Perkins, Sanders, Seabrook, Stewart, Weprin and Quinn

Whereas, The Council has learned with deep sorrow of the death on March 1, 2005 of legendary Mossad agent Peter Zvi “Zvika” Malkin who, among his countless and often unpublicized exploits, is best known to the world as the person who captured the notorious Nazi SS officer Adolph Eichmann, whose responsibilities included sending millions of Jews (including Malkin’s sister, brother-in law, their small children and 150 relatives) to German death camps during the Second World War; and

Whereas, Peter Malkin joined the Mossad, Israel’s security agency, soon after the creation of the State of Israel and in 27 years of service rose to be its head of operations; and

Whereas, Throughout his career in hostile countries he posed as, and actually was, an accomplished artist whose odd hours painting in his “studio” raised little suspicion; and

Whereas, His exploits ranged from tracking terrorists to sneaking into hostile countries’ missile factories to photograph their blueprints, to hiding beneath a very large table at an Arab League meeting to eavesdrop on planned actions against Israel, to so many heroic deeds which for security reasons can never be told; and

Whereas, Peter Malkin said that he never carried a gun, his only weapon was his brain which he used so efficiently to plan and carry out every mission; and

Whereas, After several attempts to find Adolf Eichmann failed, Isser Harel, the founder of the Mossad, sent Peter Malkin and a team of agents to Argentina in 1960 where, upon locating Eichmann, Peter convinced

his commanders to let him trail Eichmann alone so as not to scare him off; and

Whereas, He told Israeli journalist and long time friend Uri Dan “I was determined to catch him because the eyes of six million are following me;” and

Whereas, When the moment of capture approached as Eichmann, living under the assumed name of Ricardo Klement, got off a bus bringing him home from work at a Mercedes Benz plant, Peter Malkin approached him and called out “Un momentito señor” before grabbing the wanted Nazi and hustling him into a waiting car; and

Whereas, Eichmann was kept in a safe house in Argentina before being secretly smuggled out of the country disguised as a drunken El-Al pilot aboard a plane carrying Israeli diplomat Abba Eban returning from an official visit to Argentina; and

Whereas, During Eichmann’s stay at the safe house, Peter Malkin, against orders, had long discussions with him to try to understand how human beings could perpetrate such evil; and

Whereas, In one such discussion, he said to Eichmann “My sister had a boy, blond and cheerful as your son (Eichmann had a new family in Argentina) whom I have seen many times during the last days. Why is it that your son walks freely, while my sister’s (murdered) son can’t?”, a question which prompted Eichmann to stare at Malkin for a moment and then reply “Yes, but he was Jewish, wasn’t he?;” and

Whereas, Eichmann was tried in a televised and highly emotional trial in Jerusalem in 1961 and, upon being found guilty of crimes against humanity, is the only person, despite over 50 years of terrorism against Israel, ever to be executed in Israel; and

Whereas, In defense of his role in the mass murder of so many millions of innocent people, Eichmann testified that he was only “following orders;” and

Whereas, The role that Peter Malkin played in this historic capture and his many, many other heroic deeds on behalf of a civilized world will forever be remembered; and

Whereas, After his retirement from the Mossad in 1976, Peter who divided his time between America

and Tel Aviv, Israel, spent much of every year living in New York City, a place he loved to explore, some days walking 15 or 20 miles from borough to borough; and

Whereas, After retiring, Peter dedicated his life to his family, friends, his painting, and advising and lecturing around the world on security issues, during which he loved to speak to large crowds of university students, and in one example so typical of wherever he spoke, the students of Yale University refused to let him leave and kept asking him question after question for hours and hours on end; and

Whereas, Peter Malkin helped many American law enforcement agencies and was instrumental in the capture of a KGB agent bribing Brazilian army officers to buy American weapons, smashing international drug rings and confirming stories told under interrogation by Frank Terpil, a rogue CIA agent accused of selling explosives to terrorists; and

Whereas, Much of his unpaid service to America was performed at the request of his long-time friend and Manhattan District Attorney, Robert Morgenthau, whom he met during the Terpil interrogations and who would later sponsor Peter for United States citizenship; and

Whereas, At a memorial service held for Peter at Park East Synagogue on March 2, 2005, before his body was flown to Israel for a funeral and burial, District Attorney Morgenthau said that he believed Peter Malkin to be “the outstanding intelligence agent of the 20th century;” and

Whereas, Peter Malkin was much more than a famous spy - he was a warm, funny, caring, unassuming individual, who had the uncanny ability to turn an adversary into a friend; and

Whereas, Peter Malkin’s friends ranged from heads of states to heads of major corporations and from world known personalities to the ordinary man in the street, and to a group of friends who were proudest of the fact that their lives were touched and changed forever by knowing and spending time with this extraordinary human being; and

Whereas, Eight years ago, the City Council, under the sponsorship of former Speaker Peter F. Vallone and former Finance Chairman Herb Berman, honored Peter Malkin at a Proclamation Ceremony, where Peter

stated that it was an honor that he would always treasure and he proudly and prominently displayed the proclamation in his New York City apartment; and

Whereas, Peter Malkin is survived by his wife Roni, his son Omer who has so lovingly cared for his father the last 3 months, 2 daughters Tami and Adi, his son-in-law and daughter-in-law, and eight grandchildren; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York mourns the death and celebrates the life of Peter Zvi Malkin, the man who captured Adolph Eichmann.

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